

Speech by CE at International Women's Day Reception 2024 (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at the International Women's Day Reception 2024 today (March 8):

Let me now turn to our English-speaking friends.

It is my great pleasure to celebrate the International Women's Day with all of you. Today is a day dedicated specially to women. To pay tribute to your achievements. To reflect on what you have done for Hong Kong, and what more we could do for you.

In my Policy Address, I announced that we will set up a Women Affairs Team, and designate the post of Commissioner for Women Affairs, to steer the Government's relevant work. The Commissioner will work, hand in hand, with the Women's Commission to advance our women's well-being.

Women make up 54 per cent of Hong Kong's population. Women are the majority, men and boys – we are the minority. Women are well accomplished, and well empowered, in various areas. The Hong Kong SAR Government attaches great importance to promoting women's development. To this end, the Women's Commission was set up in 2001 to advise the Government on women-related policies and initiatives.

Dr Eliza Chan, a member of the Executive Council, has just taken up the role of chairing the Women's Commission this January. I have every confidence that Dr Chan will continue to lead the Commission in championing women's causes. I would also like to thank Ms Chan Yuen-han, who is here with us today, for her leadership in the past six years as the Commission's Chairperson.

The Women's Commission is, today, 23 years of age and "23" means a lot. Not just to the Women's Commission this year. It also means a lot to Hong Kong today.

Today, we are pressing ahead with the enactment of the Basic Law Article 23 legislation. Today, we have gazetted the Safeguarding National Security Bill and introduced the Bill to the Legislative Council (LegCo). Today, the LegCo, I am heartened to add, immediately convened a special meeting in the morning, and is conducting two Bills Committee meetings in the afternoon to scrutinise the Bill.

The legislation aims to improve Hong Kong's legal framework in safeguarding national security, and is paramount to maintaining our long-term prosperity and stability.

I appeal to all of you, as leaders of women's groups, as female

professionals, or simply as members of the Hong Kong community, to support our work in ensuring the early enactment of the legislation. Getting it done even one day earlier means we can more effectively safeguard national security – one day earlier.

And one last point. To all our ladies, I commend your contribution in taking care of your family. I applaud your effort in breaking the glass ceiling at the workplace. I salute your courage, competence and commitment. You are making Hong Kong a better place on every level, and we vow to continue in making Hong Kong a better place for you.

Finally, may I wish you all good health and abundant happiness. Happy International Women's Day! Thank you!

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the speech.)

